

Message Text

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CNO WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

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COMICEDEFOR

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY OSLO

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 REYKJAVIK 1639

STATE FOR P - DJEREJIAN AND EUR/NE PINKNEY

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TAGS: PFOR MARR IC US

SUBJECT: PARLIAMENT DEBATES US-ICELAND DEFENSE ARRANGEMENTS

1. ICELANDIC PARLIAMENT CONSIDERED US-ICELAND DEFENSE AGREEMENT SIGNED OCT 22 IN 3 AND ONE HALF HOUR DEBATE DEC 3. DISCUSSION WAS LOW-KEY AND ORDERLY, ALTHOUGH THERE WAS DISRUPTION FROM SPECTATORS GALLERY BY SMALL GROUP OF YOUNG, BANNER-WAVING IDP OPPONENTS WHO CALLED FOR REMOVAL OF US FORCES DURING PRIME MINISTER'S REMARKS. HIGHLIGHTS OF DEBATE FOLLOW.

2. FONMIN EINAR AGUSTSSON LED OFF DISCUSSION BY CITING AUGUST PLATFORM DECLARATION OF NEW IP-PP GOVERNMENT CALLING FOR SPECIAL COOPERATION WITH US IN DEFENSE MATTERS.

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HE NOTED THAT THIS POLICY HAD LED TO SEPTEMBER 26 TALKS

IN WASHINGTON WHICH HAD RESULTED IN TERMINATION OF ARTICLE 7 REVIEW INITIATED BY PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT AND PRODUCED AGREEMENT SIGNED IN REYKJAVIK OCTOBER 22. FONMIN READ TEXTS OF AGREEMENT, NOTES EXCHANGED BETWEEN TWO GOVERNMENTS, AND AGREED MINUTE, ALL OF WHICH HAD BEEN FORMALLY PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT PREVIOUS DAY. HE CONCLUDED HIS PRESENTATION BY STATING THAT DOCUMENTS HE HAD READ PROVIDED BASIS FOR CONTINUING REVIEW OF DEFENSE MATTERS WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF THE DEFENSE AGREEMENT WHICH WOULD BE CARRIED OUT CONSISTENT WITH THE POLICY DECLARATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT. HE ALSO NOTED THAT BY PRESENTING DOCUMENTS TO ALTHING HE HAD FULFILLED EARLIER PLEDGE THAT DEFENSE MATTERS WOULD BE SUBJECT TO PARLIAMENTARY DISCUSSION.

3. PEOPLES ALLIANCE MP AND FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEMBER GILS GUDMUNDSSON FOLLOWED AGUSTSSON. HE THANKED FONMIN FOR HIS PRESENTATION BUT SAID HE COULD NOT COMMEND HIM FOR HIS RECENT BEHAVIOR, ALTHOUGH HE REALIZED THAT FONMIN HAD FALLEN INTO BAD COMPANY. GUDMUNDSSON SAID HE HAD EXPECTED COMPROMISE BETWEEN IP AND PP DEFENSE POLICIES WHEN TWO PARTIES FORMED COALITION, BUT IP CLEARLY GOT UPPER HAND AND FONMIN IS NOW CARRYING OUT IP POLICY. DURING PREVIOUS LEFTIST ADMINISTRATION, SAID GUDMUNDSSON, GOVERNMENT HAD GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPLEMENT POLICY WHICH WOULD HAVE RESULTED IN DEPARTURE OF US FORCES BUT FAILED TO DO SO. INSTEAD, IT TOOK SUCH MEASURES AS CONSULTING USG AND NATO REGARDING IDF WITH PREDICTABLE RESULT THAT THESE PARTIES ENDORSED CONTINUATION OF US MILITARY PRESENCE. WHEN EINAR AGUSTSSON FINALLY TRIED TO ACT, ACCORDING TO GUDMUNDSSON, HE WAS THWARTED BY RIGHT-WINGERS IN PP. STILL, GUDMUNDSSON SAID, IT WAS SURPRISING THAT, HAVING FAILED TO CARRY OUT LEFTIST GOVERNMENTS DEFENSE POLICY FOR THREE YEARS, AGUSTSSON MANAGED TO IMPLEMENT CURRENT COALITION'S POLICY IN THREE MONTHS. AS FAR AS AGREEMENT ITSELF IS CONCERNED, GUDMUNDSSON SAID PA OPPOSES AND CONDEMNS IT. HE HAD AT LEAST EXPECTED AGUSTSSON TO HOLD USG TO ITS PREVIOUS PROPOSALS, BUT FONMIN HAD EVEN FAILED TO DO THIS. THEN GOVERNMENT HAD RATIFIED AGREEMENT WITHOUT

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BRINGING IT BEFORE ALTHING DESPITE AGUSTSSON'S PREVIOUS PROMISE TO DO SO. TURNING TO SPECIFIC POINTS OF AGREEMENT, GUDMUNDSSON CHARGED SUCH UNDERTAKINGS AS NEW HOUSING CONSTRUCTION AND AIRPORT SEPARATION MEANT PERPETUATION OF US MILITARY PRESENCE AND THAT REPLACING US PERSONNEL WITH ICELANDERS DOES NOT REPRESENT ANY OVERALL REDUCTION. HE ATTACKED PROPOSED COOPERATION BETWEEN IDF AND ICELANDIC COAST GUARD, CIVIL DEFENSE, AND CIVIL

AVIATION AUTHORITIES, SAYING THIS REPRESENTED SAME KIND OF INFILTRATION INTO ICELANDIC LIFE AS BASE TV HAD AND THAT IT HAD ALREADY MANIFESTED ITSELF IN SMUGGLING, THEFTS, AND DRUG SALES. HE WARNED FOREIGN MINISTER AGAINST LETTING THIS TYPE OF INFILTRATION PROGRESS TOO FAR. FINALLY, GUDMUNDSSON CLAIMED THAT NEW PACT WAS TOO AMBIGUOUS TO BE CALLED AGREEMENT AND THAT TOO MUCH WAS LEFT TO DISCRETION OF PARTIES. IN CLOSING, GUDMUNDSSON STRESSED TWO CHIEF NEGATIVE POINTS REPRESENTED BY NEW ARRANGEMENT: ARTICLE 7 REVIEW IS OVER, AND IT IS OBVIOUS THAT US MILITARY PRESENCE WILL BE MAINTAINED FOR SOME TIME TO COME.

4. BENEDIKT GRONDAL, NEW CHAIRMAN OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY, LAMENTED FACT THAT SERIOUS SPLIT HAD DEVELOPED IN ICELAND OVER DEFENSE ISSUE AND SAID AGREEMENT WITH US IS BEST SOLUTION IN VIEW OF PRESENT WORLD SITUATION. HE CHARACTERIZED ARRANGEMENTS WORKED OUT WITH US AS REPRESENTING MIDDLE COURSE BETWEEN EXTREMES OF LEFT AND RIGHT WHICH SDP HAD ADVOCATED. UNFORTUNATELY, HOWEVER, LANGUAGE WAS TOO VAGUE, AND TOO MANY PROVISIONS WERE LEFT TO IMPLEMENTATION BY US CONGRESS REFERRING TO CLAUSES "SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF APPROPRIATED FUNDS" THAT APPEAR SEVERAL TIMES IN THE AGREEMENTS. GRONDAL SAID HIS PARTY HAD ALWAYS MAINTAINED IDF SHOULD HAVE AS LITTLE INFLUENCE ON ICELANDIC SOCIETY AS POSSIBLE CONSISTENT WITH SECURITY INTERESTS. DURING YEARS 1956-71 WHEN SDP HAD BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR FOREIGN POLICY AND DEFENSE AFFAIRS, GOI HAD ALWAYS TAKEN FIRM LINE AGAINST MILITARY INFLUENCE, SAID GRONDAL, CITING REDUCTION OF US FORCES FROM 4600 TO 2400 IN 1965. SDP LEADER WENT ON TO RIDICULE PP AND EINAR AGUSTSSON FOR ALLEGED TURNAROUND ON DEFENSE MATTERS, SAYING THAT IT UNCLASSIFIED

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MUST HAVE BEEN TREAT FOR USG TO DEAL WITH AGUSTSSON, WITH WHOM MATTERS COULD BE RESOLVED IN FEW HOURS, AFTER EXPERIENCE OF WRESTLING WITH ARAB-ISRAELI PROBLEMS.

5. MAGNUS TORFI OLAFSSON, CHAIRMAN OF ORGANIZATION OF LIBERALS AND LEFTISTS, NOTED THAT WHEN ICELAND JOINED NATO IN 1949, IT WAS STIPULATED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO FOREIGN FORCES IN COUNTRY IN PEACETIME, AND YET THEY HAVE BEEN HERE FOR MANY YEARS. HE SAID RESULTS OF JUNE ELECTION WERE INCONCLUSIVE ON DEFENSE ISSUE, AND THAT NO SATISFACTORY EXPLANATION HAD BEEN ADVANCED TO JUSTIFY CONTINUED US MILITARY PRESENCE. REAL REASON, ACCORDING TO OLAFSSON, IS IT SIMPLY IMPOSED WILL ON PP. ALL OPPOSITION TO CURRENT GOVERNMENT IS BASED LARGELY ON COALITIONS DEFENSE POLICY, SAID OLAFSSON, WHO ADDED

THAT RECENT OLL CONVENTION HAD UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO
CONDEMN DEPARTURE FROM TERMS OF ICELAND'S INITIAL AD-
HERENCE TO NATO.

5. KJARTAN OLAFSSON, PEOPLES ALLIANCE, SARCASTICALLY
COMMENDED CHANGE IN SDP POLICY REPRESENTED BY BENEDIKT
GRONDAL'S DENOUNCING OF EXTREMISTS SINCE, OLAFSSON SAID,
SDP HAD RECENTLY BEEN IN CAMP OF SUCH "EXTREMISTS" AS
DEFENDED COUNTRY PETITION ADVOCATES. OLAFSSON WENT ON
TO CRITICIZE VARIOUS POINTS IN AGREEMENT. HE CLAIMED
THAT US SENATE WAS TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR AIRPORT
PROJECTS BEFORE ICELANDIC PARLIAMENT HAD EVER DISCUSSED
IT; THAT THE 470 APARTMENTS TO BE BUILT REPRESENTED TWICE
NUMBER OF HOUSING UNITS OCCUPIED BY US PERSONNEL
LIVING OFF BASE, AND THAT WHEREAS BEFORE ICELAND COULD
HAVE BEEN RID OF IDF BY GIVING 18 MONTHS NOTICE, IMPE-
MENTATION OF NEW PROJECTS INDICATED 10 YEAR STAY OF US
FORCES. OLAFSSON THEN ATTACKED PROPOSED COOPERATION

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UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 REYKJAVIK 1639

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SUBJECT: PARLIAMENT DEBATES US-ICELAND DEFENSE ARRANGEMENTS

BETWEEN IDF AND ICELANDIC COAST GUARD AND CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITIES ASKING IF THIS MEANT IDF WOULD SEIZE NEXT INTRUDING WEST GERMAN TRAWLER OF IF COAST GUARD WOULD NOW TAKE OVER ANY NATO RESPONSIBILITIES. HE ADDED WARNING AGAINST ALL INVOLVEMENT OF ARMED FORCES IN ICELANDIC LIFE, SAYING THAT WHILE IT WAS BAD ENOUGH THAT DANGER OF WAR WAS INCREASED BY IDF PRESENCE, GREATER DANGER IS TO MINDS OF ICELANDERS. OLAFSSON WENT ON TO REFUTE THREE MAIN ARGUMENTS ADVANCED BY IDF SUPPORTERS: CLAIM THAT WORLD THAT SITUATION IS TOO DANGEROUS IS NOT VALID, HE SAID, SINCE THERE HAVE BEEN IMPROVEMENTS

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SINCE 1949 WHEN IT WAS AGREED NOT TO STATION FORCES IN ICELAND; CLAIM THAT MBFR NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE JEOPARDIZED IS HOLLOW, SINCE SUCCESSFUL FORCE-REDUCTION TALKS WOULD THEMSELVES DEMONSTRATE EAST-WEST CLIMATE IS SUCH THAT IDF UNNECESSARY; AND THREAT OF SOVIETS CANNOT BE SO GRAVE IF US SENATE, WHICH NO ONE BELIEVES IS ACTING ON USSR'S BEHALF, IS ON VERGE OF DEMANDING REDUCTION OF US FORCES OVERSEAS. HE ADDED THAT DENMARK AND NORWAY HAVE BOTH RECENTLY CUT DEFENSE BUDGETS AND REDUCED PERIOD OF MILITARY SERVICE, AND CONCLUDED BY ATTACKING SIGNING OF AGREEMENT WITHOUT PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL AND WARNING AGAINST STRENGTHENING OF MILITARY INFLUENCE IN ICELAND THAT NEW ARRANGEMENT REPRESENTS.

7. PRIME MINISTER GEIR HALLGRIMSSON, NEXT SPEAKER, SAID THAT IN KEEPING WITH GOVERNMENT'S PLATFORM, INVOCATION OF ARTICLE 7 HAD BEEN RESCINDED BY NEW AGREEMENT. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT AGREEMENT CONTAINED THREE IMPORTANT NEW POINTS: SEPARATION OF CIVIL AVIATION FROM DEFENSE OPERATIONS, ASSUMPTION BY ICELANDERS OF INCREASED NON-MILITARY JOBS, AND ON-BASE HOUSING FOR ALL US PERSONNEL. NEW PROJECTS MUST BE COMMISSIONED TO CARRY OUT THESE CHANGES, SAID PM, BUT EVERY EFFORT WOULD BE MADE TO MINIMIZE IMPACT ON LABOR MARKET AND ECONOMY IN GENERAL. HALLGRIMSSON STRESSED THAT NEW AGREEMENT TOOK INTO ACCOUNT SECURITY NEEDS OF NATION AND REPRESENTED MAJORITY WILL AS REFLECTED IN 1974 ELECTION. AS WAS THE CASE BEFORE, ORIGINAL 1951 AGREEMENT IS FULLY VALID AND, AS STIPULATED IN THAT PACT, ICELANDERS HAVE FULL AUTHORITY TO TERMINATE AGREEMENT WHENEVER SITUATION WAR-

RANTS. HE NOTED THAT THREE OF ICELAND'S POLITICAL PARTIES AND POSSIBLY PART OF FOURTH AGREED ON ICELAND'S NATO MEMBERSHIP AND COOPERATION WITH WESTERN NATIONS AND CALLED FOR WIDE CONSENSUS ON FOREIGN POLICY AND SECURITY MATTERS. PM SAID HE WOULD NOT RESPOND TO CRITICISM THAT NEW AGREEMENT IS AMBIGUOUS, SINCE BASID 1951 AGREEMENT IS CLEAR-CUT, AND UNDER IT ICELANDERS HAVE ALL NECESSARY AUTHORITY. HE SAID IT WAS CURIOUS THAT PA HAD ATTACKED PROVISION DEALING WITH COOPERATION BETWEEN COAST GUARD AND IDF, SINCE PA HAD EARLIER DEMANDED THAT IDF INTERVENE IN FISHERIES DISPUTE WITH UK. HOWEVER, UNCLASSIFIED

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HALLGRIMSSON ADDED, AS HE HAD EXPLAINED BEFORE, NATO CANNOT INTERVENE IN DISPUTES BETWEEN MEMBERS. RESPONDING TO CRITICS WHO INVOKED 1949 STIPULATION OF NO TROOPS IN ICELAND DURING PEACETIME, HE SAID THERE HAVE BEEN 55 WARS SINCE THAT TIME AND CITED FORMER PM BJARNI BENEDIKTSSON AS SAYING THAT TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS, WHICH MEANT WORLD WAR COULD ERUPT INSTANTANEOUSLY, DEMANDED NEW DEFINITION OF PEACE. HALLGRIMSSON ADDED THAT MUCH ACCLAIMED EAST-WEST THAW HAD NOT DISPLAYED MANY TANGIBLE SIGNS WITH POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF RECENT VLADIVOSTOK STRATEGIC ARMS AGREEMENT. ANSWERING KJARTAN OLAFSSON'S POINT ABOUT DEFENSE DECISIONS BY NORWAY AND DENMARK, PM SAID THESE ENJOY BOTH CLOSER GEOGRAPHIC PROXIMITY AND MILITARY COOPERATION WITH THEIR ALLIES AND ARE NEITHER ISOLATED NOR SOLELY DEPENDENT ON FOREIGN FORCES AS IS ICELAND.

8. STEIGRIMUR HERMANSSON, ANTI-IDF SECRETARY OF PROGRESSIVE PARTY, SAID HIS PARTY'S DEFENSE POLICY WAS UNCHANGED. HE SAID HE FELT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THERE BE NO ARMED FORCES IN ICELAND DURING PEACETIME AND, THAT WHILE IT IS DIFFICULT TO DEFINE PEACE, HE THOUGHT THAT PROSPECTS WERE BETTER NOW THAN FOR SOME TIME. HE BELIEVED, THEREFORE, THAT PP'S STIPULATION OF NO FORCES DURING PEACETIME SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED. HERMANSSON SAID DIFFERENCES BETWEEN IP AND PP DEFENSE POLICIES SHOULD HAVE BEEN MADE CLEAR IN COALITION PLATFORM. HE ADDED THAT ICELANDIC YOUTH SHOULD NOT MATURE IN BELIEF THAT IDF PRESENCE IS SOMETHING NATURAL. HE ALSO COMMENTED ON US SENATE'S MOVES TO CUT US FORCES ABROAD AND SAID HE HOPED ICELANDIC PARLIAMENT WOULD NOT BE BEATEN BY AMERICAN COUNTERPARTS IN ABOLISHING BASE.

9. CONCLUDING DEBATE, FONMIN AGUSTSSON PRESENTED RESPONSE TO CERTAIN POINTS MADE BY OTHER SPEAKERS,

ESPECIALLY GILS GUDMUNDSSON SINCE HIS SPEECH COVERED MOST OF AREAS TOUCHED ON BY OTHERS. AGUSTSSON DENIED THAT PP DEFENSE POLICY HAD BEEN SACRIFICED AS RESULT OF COALITION WITH IP, BUT THAT COMPROMISES HAD BEEN UNCLASSIFIED

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NECESSARY. MOREOVER, SEVERAL POINTS IN NEW AGREEMENT ARE CONSISTENT WITH PP DEFENSE GOALS. AGUSTSSON SAID DEFENSE POLICY OF LEFTIST GOVERNMENT WAS GOOD ONE, BUT IN WAKE OF JUNE ELECTION IT COULD NOT BE IMPLEMENTED. PP CONSIDERED OTHER ISSUES TO BE OF GREATER IMPORTANCE AND COMPROMISED ON DEFENSE. HE SAID HE HAD BROKEN NO PROMISES IN NOT PUTTING NEW AGREEMENT BEFORE ALTHING, SINCE THERE HAD BEEN NO CHANGES IN ORIGINAL AGREEMENT. THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS WERE NOT AIMED AT PERPETUATING MILITARY PRESENCE, ACCORDING TO AGUSTSSON, AND ICELAND COULD INVOKE ARTICLE 7 AGAIN AT ANY TIME. DISCUSSING DEPENDENCE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW PROVISIONS ON US CONGRESS, AGUSTSSON CONCEDED THAT APPROPRIATIONS MUST BE SOUGHT BUT SAID HE WAS CONFIDENT THESE WOULD BE GRANTED. REGARDING COOPERATION BETWEEN IDF AND ICELANDIC AUTHORITIES, AGUSTSSON SAID HE FELT THIS WAS NECESSARY. COAST GUARD SHOULD TAKE OVER RESCUE WORK NOW DONE BY IDF BUT IT WAS NOT INTENDED THAT IDF SHOULD ASSUME FUNCTIONS OF COAST GUARD. HE ADDED THAT HELP, WHEN NEEDED, SHOULD BE ACCEPTED AND SAID HE BELIEVED EVERYONE WAS THANKFUL FOR US HELP DURING WESTMANN ISLANDS DISASTER. ON QUESTION OF IMPACT OF NEW ARRANGEMENTS ON LABOR MARKET, FONMIN SAID HE DID NOT THINK ALL ICELANDIC REPLACEMENTS FOR US PERSONNEL WOULD COME FROM FISHERIES SECTOR AND SECONDED PM'S PROMISE THAT ALL STEPS WOULD BE TAKEN TO MINIMIZE IMPACT ON ECONOMY. AGUSTSSON ALSO CORRECTED BENEDIKT GRONDAL'S REFERENCE TO NUMBERS OF US FORCES, NOTING THAT WHEN HE BECAME FOREIGN MINISTER IN 1971 THERE WERE NOT 2400 TROOPS, BUT 3300. FONMIN CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT WITH NEW ARRANGEMENTS, STEP HAD BEEN TAKEN IN RIGHT DIRECTION, I.E. TOWARD REDUCTION IN SIZE OF DEFENSE FORCE, SEPARATION OF CIVILIAN FROM MILITARY ACTIVITIES, AND ON-BASE HOUSING. ARRANGEMENTS DO NOT IN ANY WAY TAMPER WITH RIGHT OF ICELANDERS TO WORK TOWARD POSSIBLE CHANGES IN AGREEMENT OR TO TERMINATE IT ALTOGETHER. IRVING

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